

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Application for Local Sponsor Certification (LAEPP 2017)

### General Questions

- Question:** Who is eligible to apply?  
**Answer:** Cities, counties, townships, soil and water conservation districts and non-profit organizations such as land trusts are eligible to become certified local sponsors.
- Question:** Can landowners apply for local sponsor certification?  
**Answer:** No. Landowners apply at a later stage after local sponsors have been selected for funding. Under the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, landowners will apply to and through local sponsors.
- Question:** When can local sponsors apply for certification?  
**Answer:** The application period for LAEPP 2017 Local Sponsors is **September 14 through October 14, 2016**.
- Question:** What is the purpose of applying to become a certified local sponsor?  
**Answer:** In applying to become a certified local sponsor, an organization seeks to demonstrate that they have the capability to acquire, hold, manage and enforce agricultural easements and that they have the staff and resources to carry out the work. Local sponsors selected for certification will receive funds from the Ohio Department of Agriculture to manage a grant application process in their communities. Local landowners may then apply to the certified local sponsors through a competitive process to sell an agricultural easement on their land to ODA and the local sponsor.

### Application-specific Questions

- Question:** In completing Section B (Organization Capacity – Staff) Question 4 of the Application for Local Sponsor Certification, do all answers for rows a-e have to match “total staff” as presented on row f?  
**Answer:** Not necessarily. The total staff in B4f should represent total staff of the organization, while B4a-e may include figures for individuals that the organization’s staff have *access* to regarding the given topic.
- Question:** In completing Section B (Organization Capacity – Staff) of the Application for Local Sponsor Certification, if an organization has expertise that falls outside the questions listed, how can that information be provided?  
**Answer:** If the information is directly applicable to staff resources, add it to the Comment section (I).

7. **Question:** In completing Section C (Organization Capacity – Budget), should budget information be provided based on the previous, current or next fiscal year?  
**Answer:** Provide actual budget information based on the current fiscal year. Use the comments section to elaborate if necessary.
8. **Question:** In completing Section C (Organization Capacity – Budget), how exact should the figures be?  
**Answer:** Budget figures should be rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.
9. **Question:** How can additional information be added for sections of the application without a Comment section?  
**Answer:** Comments can be included in Section I - General Comments.
10. **Question:** Regarding Section D (Organizational Capacity –Easements) Question 5, shall I only include easements where my organization holds the Easement alone with NRCS, or should I also include those easements where my organization is the local grantee and the Ohio Department of Agricultural was the State Grantee and Cooperating Entity with NRCS?  
**Answer:** If your organization is named as a Grantee on a closed Federal FRPP or ACEP-ALE Deed, include it as a part of Question 5. You may find that some easements can be counted in D3 and D5.
11. **Question:** Regarding Section D (Organizational Capacity –Easements) Question 8, do I list every county of my service area, even those in which I do not plan on holding an application round for landowners?  
**Answer:** Please list all counties of your service area in Question 8. When you come to Sections F (Local Support) and G (Service Area Statistics), please respond with information on the counties to which the organization intends to prepare landowner applications. For instance, your organization may have a service area of 10 counties (list them in Section D, Question 8), but may only be planning to prepare landowner applications from 2-3 counties within that service area.
12. **Question:** Regarding Section D (Organizational Capacity –Easements) and Section G (Service Area Statistics), what do I do if the links do not work when I click on them?  
**Answer:** In most cases, clicking on the provided link should take you to the appropriate document. If it does not, try to copy and paste the link into your browser. If that still doesn't work, contact the Office of Farmland Preservation ([farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov)) so that we may provide you with the appropriate document via email.
13. **Question:** Regarding Section E (Organizational Capacity – Other) is there a list of experienced organizations which may be interested in mentoring a less experienced organization?  
**Answer:** Please contact our office at 614-728-6210 and we will suggest organizations you may want to contact.

14. **Question:** Regarding Section E (Organizational Capacity – Other) Question 2, how can experienced organizations identify organizations that may be seeking a mentor in order to share expertise and gain points advantage in the scoring?  
**Answer:** Please contact the Office of Farmland Preservation by phone (614-728-6210) or email ([farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov)) and indicate the organization’s interest in serving as a mentor so that we can share the information with those organizations looking for a mentor. Another option is to visit the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT) website, <http://www.ohiolandtrusts.org/> and exchange information with other farmland preservation organizations.
15. **Question:** In completing Section E3 (For Land Trusts and Charitable Groups Only), do I need to attach all of the same documents from last funding round if they have not changed?  
**Answer:** Follow the directions on the application questions E3-a thru E3-g and refer to notes on the Application Coversheets (following the application).
16. **Question:** Regarding Section F (Local Support) Question 1, what if the county has multiple documents that show agriculture as a priority?  
**Answer:** Include the date of the most recent adopted document for each county, and attach all relevant documentation that puts the county on record as setting aside land for agricultural production and promoting agricultural land use. Mark the document to indicate where it speaks to setting aside land for agricultural production or promotes agricultural land use. Do not send documents where this cannot be shown.
17. **Question:** Regarding all questions in Section F (Local Support), how should a township or city respond?  
**Answer:** If the applicant for certification is a township or municipality, respond to the questions in F with information applicable to your jurisdiction. For Section G provide county level data so that your responses can be compared at the same scale as other respondents.
18. **Question:** Regarding Sections F (Local Support) and G (Service Area Statistics), how can I add responses for more than three counties?  
**Answer:** If your organization is planning to accept landowner applications from more than three counties for this funding round, please print additional copies of page 3 and label them 3a, 3b, etc. If the organization represents many counties but plans to accept applications from landowners in a subset of counties, only the information for those counties is required for Sec. F & G.
19. **Question:** In completing Section G (Service Area Statistics) Question 1, “Has the county previously received AEPP/LAEPF funds to purchase an easement...,” how do I respond for closed and pending easements?  
**Answer:** Use the chart below:

Response	Description
“Yes”	If the county has closed an easement with ODA in the purchase program.
“Yes”	If the county has an easement in process and pending completion with ODA in the purchase program.
“No”	If the county has neither closed nor pending easements with ODA in the purchase program.

20. **Question:** In answering Section H (Organizational Preference), is there a way for me to send my localized content to ODA for review prior to Certification?

**Answer:** Yes. You can email your replacement “Other Factors” Section, for a total of 29 points in the landowner application, to the Office of Farmland Preservation at [farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov). Staff will review your questions and point structure, to ensure it meets ORC (Ohio Revised Code) and OAC (Ohio Administrative Code) requirements. Submitting questions for pre-approval to ODA during the local sponsor Certification application period does not guarantee Certification or funding. Visit the Current Local Sponsor Documents page on the Clean Ohio LAEPP website for *Instructions for Preparing LAEPP Localized Questions*. If Certified, Local Sponsors will have to input their localized questions into the LAEPP landowner application system prior to the start of the online landowner application period.

21. **Question:** Regarding Section J (Signatures), what if the person who is completing the application is also the individual that would normally sign under “authorized by”?

**Answer:** The signature area was designed to accommodate a variety of organizational structures. If the person completing the application is also the authorizing signatory for the organization, have them sign in both places.

22. **Question:** Regarding submission of our Application for Local Sponsor Certification, how do I submit my application and attachments to ODA?

**Answer:** Local Sponsors may submit their applications and required attachments in hardcopy or electronically by Friday, October 14, 2016.

**Updated  
08/16/2016**